

File Newsletter

THE MID-ATLANTIC ARCHIVIST

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Conference SAA ISSUE

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MID-ATLANTIC ARCHIVISTS HOLD FIRST ALL-MEMBER MEETING IN WILMINGTON

One hundred and fifty archivists and manuscript curators from seven states and the District of Columbia met in Wilmington, Delaware on October 13 and 14 for the first semi-annual meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference. The organization, whose steering committee met for the first time in June, is aimed at midlevel staff members of any institution in the seven-state and D.C. area with records or personal papers in its care. Participants included curators, archivists and librarians from state and county historical societies, industry, religious institutions and community colleges, as well as special collections and state and federal archives.

The program was diversified and designed to appeal to several levels of staff activity. In an informal workshop atmosphere, participants were encouraged to exchange ideas and experiences. The conference program emphasized the problems of small institutions with limited funds. The sessions consisted of four two and one-half hour sessions on cataloging, handling of photographs, college archives and aid to the researchers, and 20 one-hour workshops covering a range of topics from in-house microfilming to archivist-historian relations. A six-member program committee had prepared the program entirely on the basis of results from a questionnaire distributed to the membership in July, listing 40 possible program topics. Some topics, including cataloging, standardization of terminology and value of computer technology clearly appealed to supervisory staff.

In a questionnaire distributed to 100 participants of the meeting, only 22 identified themselves as members of SAA. Many said that they seldom attend annual SAA meetings, and were interested in the practical group meetings MARAC offered within a reasonable traveling distance. Registration for the meeting was \$2, and lunches were supplied at \$2 by the women of First and Central Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, where the workshop sessions were held.

MARAC ORGANIZATION MEETING APPROVES 8-MEMBER STEERING COMMITTEE

In an organization meeting held Friday evening, October 13, participants in the first MARAC conference approved an ad hoc steering committee to carry the organization until its second meeting, to be held in the Spring. Chairing the committee is Peter Silverman, Curator of Manuscripts, Urban Archives, Temple University, Philadelphia. Other members, who will supervise mailing and membership in their states, are Mary Boccaccio, Archivist, University of Maryland; Gladys Coghlan, Historical Society of Delaware; Mary Jenkins, Department of Archives and History, West Virginia; Michael Plunkett, University of Virginia Library; Charlotte Price, Moreland-Spingarn Collection, Howard University, Washington, D.C.; Kenneth Richards, Bureau of Archives and History, New Jersey State Library.

open to anyone with primary records in his custody, whether or not he called himself an archivist, the group approved the concept of a semi-annual meeting, and the workshop approach which emphasized participation.

MARAC PARTICIPANTS DEFER QUESTION OF SAA AFFILIATION

At a business session on Saturday, October 14, 87 participants in the Wilmington meeting voted against formal affiliation with the Society of American Archivists at this time, subject to the development of MARAC's own program, and further discussion. Comment during the session, led by Frank Evans, NARS, ranged from outright anti-SAA feeling to a plea for active affiliation, delivered by a former state archivist. Philip Mooney, Balch Institute, Philadelphia, opposed affiliation on the grounds that SAA was unresponsive to members. Miriam Crawford, Temple University, urged the group to remain separate from the national body, but suggested that members work for a strong national organization to represent all archivists. Elsie Freivogel, Smithsonian Institution, agreed, noting that individual members should learn to pressure the national for change. She pointed out that at least one function of regional groups was to aid the national body in redefining its own purpose.

Leon deValinger, retired Archivist of Delaware and a founder of SAA, urged affiliation, and several other participants were concerned about the need for SAA backing in future MARAC projects. The resolution, put by the chair, was accepted in a voice vote. MARAC is the first regional organization to discuss in open session the question of SAA-regional affiliation. A copy of the summary of the meeting has been forwarded to Robert Warner, Secretary of SAA.

JOB OFFERING

Archives-Library. Responsibility for monograph collection, state and county documents, maps, newspapers and some processing. Reference in rotation with staff. Some archives experience and MLS required. Write Mary Boccaccio, Archivist, Maryland Room, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, College Park, Md. 20742

PROJECTS SUGGESTED BY MARAC MEMBERS AT WILMINGTON MEETING

Mary Boccaccio, former MARAC Chairwoman and Steering Committee Member from Maryland, reports that the following projects were suggested at the Wilmington Meeting. Members who are interested in working on any of these should be in touch with Ms. Boccaccio, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, College Park 20742:

1. A directory of members, arranged by state, with special interests and skills
 2. Informal committees of three members per state to appraise and request members' archival programs, and give useful criticism.
 3. Up to date lists of archival supplies and sources of technical information.
 4. Working guide on how to organize a cooperative buying unit for expensive supplies.
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5. Mimeographed guide on everything you've ever wanted to know about setting up an archives and were afraid to ask -- shelving, space requirements, and the like.
6. Informal workshops given by members at their institutions, providing one to three days of practical guidance in archives management, or some aspect of it -- handling photographs, microfilm technique, and the like.
7. Placement service
8. Newsletter
9. Help to depositories in reporting their holding to IUCI C.
10. Union list of finding aids in the region.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES SHOW APPROVAL OF OCTOBER PROGRAM FORMAT, INTEREST IN SAA

Participants in the IARAC sessions held in Wilmington liked the variety of one-hour workshop sessions and their length, according to a questionnaire distributed to 100 members during the meeting. Sixty-two of the forms were returned. The two and one-half hour sessions drew less favorable comment, largely on grounds of length, not content. "Almost beyond the limits of human endurance," one participant said. Questions were useful and discussion lively, with some reservations: "I listened with interest," "Yes, but sometimes too esoteric," "The strongest sessions were those with a take-charge leader."

Participants saw a number of projects arising from the sessions, though many were not aware of similar projects already under way in SAA committees. A member attending the one-hour session on aiding the researcher suggested a statement on conditions of access to collections. Several spoke to the need for reprints of the Frank Evans bibliography, The Administration of Modern Archives, 1970, and difficult-to-find articles on photo conservation. Willman Spawn, Conservator of the Library of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, reported an interest in a re-run of a seminar on paper conservation recently given in Philadelphia. Another member remarked the need for a union list of finding aids available at institutions in the area.

Asked if they were members of SAA, 38 respondents said no, though four of these were institutional members. Twenty-two participants said they were members of the national body. Numbers were reversed, however, when participants were asked whether they were more or less interested in SAA, having participated in the regional group. Of the 33 people who answered the question, 27 were more interested and six less. The response confirmed the impression of discussion leaders in sessions dealing with professionalism and training that interest in the certification and professional status of archivists ran high.

The questionnaire will be used by the Spring 1973 program committee in planning sessions.

NEWSLETTER: A QUESTION OF SOURCES

Although 39 respondents to the IARAC questionnaire said the organization needed a newsletter, sixteen failed to answer and five checked a forthright No. Of those who responded to the question on content, five were

such material.

Need for a newsletter was commonly assumed among those of us who organized I.A.A.C., and demurs on the question from those of you from whom we'd agreed to take orders is startling. We want to think that our snowed-under colleague speaks for the doubtful, because we are aware of the success of the newsletter of the Society of Ohio Archivists, the New Archivist, published by David Horn, and the newsletter of Archivists for Change, published by Lynn Donovan. Until we are proved to be wrong, we'll put out this newsletter. We are preparing a form which will go to various members to report their activity and acquisitions, and we plan to publish steering committee reports. Meanwhile, we suggest you send us material on the following, not to exceed four paragraphs:

Projects which your institution is undertaking which would be applicable to similar depositories in the region, or useful to researchers you serve: county historical society projects, one or two man/woman collection programs, programs using volunteer processors, and the like.

Notices of acquisitions

Announcements of finding aids, either new or still current.

Special collection projects: women's history, urban collections, ethnic material, local records

Job openings

Technical notes: Sources of supplies, suggestions for sharing purchases, useful books or articles, including material in American Archivist Technical Notes on which you have comment.

Pleas for help: Questions on which you need practical answers.

Comment on professional issues, and complaints or inquiries on ethical problems.

Material should be sent to any one of the following:

Edmund Berkeley, Jr., University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va. 22901

Elsie Freivogel, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. 20560

Donald Harrison, Machine Readable Archives, National Archives and Records Center, Washington, D.C. 20408

Julie Harsteller, 1060 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10028

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The July/October issue of The American Archivist carries Isabel V. Clarke's "Writing on Archives, Current Records, and Historical Manuscripts," a bibliography of publications in archival administration.

The SAA Committee on Reference, Access and Photoduplication Policies has published "Draft Standards for Access to Research Material in Archival and Manuscript Repositories," a combined effort with the Committee on Collecting of Personal Papers and Manuscripts. The standards appear in the July/October American Archivist, pp. 454-455. These standards will be discussed by the Council of SAA; meanwhile they provide ground rules for depositories concerned with questions of access and copying. With the access standards are "Draft Standards on Appraisal of Gifts."

A directory of college and university archives in the U.S. and Canada is now available from the office of the Secretary, Society of American Archivists. The directory is a product of